AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as indicated hereafter. It is believed that the following amendments and additions add no new matter to the present application.

In the Specification: [Use ~~strikethrough~~ for deleted matter (or double square brackets "[[]]" if the strikethrough is not easily perceivable, *i.e.*, "4" or a punctuation mark) and underlined for added matter.]

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 1, line 10 as follows:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to co-pending and commonly assigned U.S. patent applications entitled "Line Sharing Multipoint POTS Splitter with Intelligent Termination" ~~filed on even date herewith (Atty. Docket No. 061607-1410),~~ U.S. Serial No. 09/749,338, filed on December 27, 2000, "Line Sharing Multipoint POTS Splitter Masking Noise" ~~filed on even date herewith (Atty. Docket No. 061607-1660),~~ U.S. Serial No. 09/7498,902, filed on December 27, 2000, and "Line Sharing Multipoint POTS Splitter Controllable Line Selector" ~~filed on even date herewith (Atty. Docket No. 061607-1670),~~ U.S. Serial No. 09/749,715, filed on December 27, 2000, which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 10, line 1 as follows:

Moreover, in the above-described illustrative example, the user of telephone 30A at CP 24A typically does not want his telephone conversation detectable by a third party who may have access to subscriber loops 26B-26D. That is, the user of telephone 30A typically does not want their conversation being communicated over subscriber ~~lop~~ loop 26A to be eavesdropped on. For example, the user of telephone 30A may be a stockbroker or security analyst who may be discussing confidential information. An eavesdropper may desire to eavesdrop on the conversation to gain access to the potentially valuable confidential information. Such an eavesdropper, having access to

one of the subscriber loops 26B-26D, could detect the leakage signal with appropriate amplification equipment such that the conversation on telephone 30A could be overheard. Thus, there is an heretofore unaddressed need to prevent a third party eavesdropper from overhearing leakage signals that may exist on subscriber loops which have been coupled into a common multiple virtual line (MVL) transceiver 60.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 18, line 17 as follows:

FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating an alternative embodiment of the amplifier-based coupler of FIG. 10.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 21, line 10 as follows:

Generally described, the present invention pertains to an eavesdropping prevention system and method which prevents, or at least ~~make~~ makes more difficult, the detection of leakage signal 80. A first embodiment of the eavesdropping prevention system and method, the connection sharing multipoint POTS splitter with intelligent termination, employs a leakage signal (LS) filter which effectively blocks the lower frequency leakage signal 80, thereby preventing the leakage signal from propagating to other communication connections which are coupled to a common communication device such as, but not limited to, a multiple virtual connection (MVL) digital equipment unit. Also included may be a detect and terminate function which detects service on the communication connection to which the LS filter is coupled to. The detect and terminate function automatically de-couples (terminates) the LS filter if the communication connection becomes out-of-service. The second embodiment of the eavesdropping prevention system and method includes an amplifier-based coupler configured with a nearly-zero impedance path, which shunts the leakage signal away from the other communication connections. The third embodiment of the eavesdropping prevention system and method includes a mask signal generator which generates a mask signal that is superimposed over leakage signal 80. The fourth embodiment of the eavesdropping

prevention system and method includes a controllable line selection unit which isolates the communication connection over which a signal is being communicated from other communication connections.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 34, line 12 as follows:

FIG. 10 illustrates a portion of a telephony system 20''', which corresponds to telephony system 20" (FIG. 3), employing the second embodiment of the eavesdropping prevention system and method, a connection sharing multipoint POTS splitter with an amplifier-based coupler, hereinafter referred to as the amplifier-based coupler for convenience. Amplifier-based coupler 146 couples MVL transceiver 60 with a plurality of subscriber loops 26A-26C. For convenience of illustration, the amplifier-based coupler 146 couples four subscriber loops 26A-26D to MVL transceiver 60. However, the amplifier-based coupler 146 could be configured to couple two subscriber loops, three subscriber loops, or more than four subscriber loops, to the MVL transceiver 60. MVL transceiver 60 is used for convenience of illustration. The amplifier-based coupler 146 will work equally well with any similarly functioning communication device or other communication devices wherein a plurality of communication connections are coupled together such that leakage signals may propagate ~~unto~~ onto the commonly coupled communication connections. It is intended that all such additional systems and communication devices employing the amplifier-based coupler 146 be included within the scope of this disclosure and be protected by the accompanying claims for the amplifier-based coupler 146.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 38, line 3 as follows:

Line coupler 158B is shown to couple connections 156 and 164 to subscriber loop 26B. For convenience of illustration, a detailed diagram of line coupler 158B showing internal components similar to the components of line coupler 158A is not shown. Line ~~Coupler~~ coupler 158B, when coupled to subscriber loop 26B and connections 156 and

164, would be coupled in a similar manner and have like components as the line coupler 158A. Likewise, line coupler 158C couples connections 156 and 164 to subscriber loop 26C and line coupler 158D couples connections 156 and 164 to subscriber loop 26D. Thus, the amplified Tx+ signal on connection 156 is transmitted to the tip conductor of each of the subscriber loops 26A-26D, and the amplified Tx- signal on connection 164 is transmitted to the ring conductor of each of the subscriber loops 26A-26D. Subscriber loops 26A-26D provide the transmission path to customer premises 24A-24D (FIG. 3). Thus, digital devices 38A-38D (FIG. 3) are able to receive data signals (Tx+, Tx-) transmitted by the MVL transceiver 60 transmitter 140.

Please amend the paragraph starting on p. 57, line 10 as follows:

FIG. 16C illustrates yet another possible alternative embodiment of a mask signal 284. Mask signal 284 includes portions of the mask signal 284a-c which may vary in amplitude and/or frequency. For convenience of illustration, mask signal 284 is shown having three portions, 284a, 284b and 284c. The first portion, 284a, is seen to have an amplitude slightly less than the corresponding portion of leakage signal 80. The middle portion, 284b, is seen to have a greater amplitude than the corresponding portion of leakage signal 80. The third portion, 284c, is seen to have an amplitude such that the part is less than and another part is greater than the corresponding portion of leakage signal 80. In totality, the mask signal 284 has been generated such that leakage signal 80 is difficult to meaningfully detect and amplify by a potential eavesdropper.